

THE ANNUAL REPORT (1902)

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the

URBAN DISTRICT OF SHANKLIN.

Gentlemen: -

During the past year there have been registered within your district Eighty One (81) births viz. Fifty (50) males and Thirty One (31) females. Of these four were illegitimate that is the illegitimate birth rate is 4.9 per 100 births.

The birth rate is therefore 15.1 per 1000 as against 14.1 per 1000 last year.

During the same period there have occurred Sixty One (61) deaths viz. Twenty Eight (28) males and Thirty Three (33) females.

The death rate is therefore 11.3 per 1000 ^{which is} ~~as compared~~
~~exactly the same as last year.~~
~~with 11.4 per 1000 last year.~~

As compared with last year the birth rate has slightly increased while the death rate has ^{remained unaltered.} ~~slightly decreased.~~

From the point of view of age the deaths have occurred as follows: -

Under 1 year	7 deaths.
Over 1 year and under 5 yrs -	4 "

Over 5 years	and under	15 yrs.	3 deaths.
" 15 years	" "	25 yrs.	2 "
" 25 years	" "	65 yrs.	24 "
" 65 years			21 "
			61

The above deaths were certified as due to the following causes: -

7 deaths were due to	Diseases of the Heart.
6 " " " "	Cancer.
5 " " " "	Bronchitis.
5 " " " "	Phthisis. pulmonalis.
5 " " " "	Cerebral Haemorrhage.
4 " " " "	Infantile Convulsions.
4 " " " "	Senile Decay.
3 " " " "	Diphtheria.
2 " " " "	Bright's Disease.
2 " " " "	Tubercular Meningitis.
2 " " " "	Influenza.
2 " " " "	Debility from birth.
I was due to	Dilatation of the Stomach.
I " " " "	Embolism.
I " " " "	Diabetes.
I " " " "	Cirrhosis of the Liver.
I " " " "	Appendicitis.
I " " " "	Pernicious Anaemia.
I " " " "	Spinal Myelitis.
I " " " "	Gall Stones.
I " " " "	Nephritis.

I death was uncertified.

During the past year there were 3 deaths attributable to zymotic disease, and these were three cases of Diphtheria, one being an adult and the other two children. Twenty one cases of zymotic disease have been notified to me during the past twelve months.

Of these twenty one cases, one was Erysipelas and one was Scarlet fever, the remaining 19 being cases of Diphtheria. The case of Scarlet fever was that of a child who contracted the disease before coming within the district and was at once removed to the Isolation Hospital and no further cases occurred within the district.

Of the nineteen cases of Diphtheria, three of these terminated fatally, the adult patient died at home while the two children died in the Isolation Hospital. It is a regrettable fact that the word "Epidemic" is so much misused, during the autumn I was frequently applied to for information regarding the epidemic of Diphtheria supposed to be raging in Shanklin. The fact is that during the last quarter of the year there were 9 cases of Diphtheria, so to speak of an epidemic was simply ridiculous in the extreme and does an untold amount of harm and can do no good whatever.

If parents would only allow the first child afflicted with the disease to be at once removed to the Isolation Hospital, I have not the least doubt but that the number of cases would be reduced by a half.

Drainage: -

The main drainage of Shanklin is good, the main sewers are in good working order. There is however an exception to this viz. the sewer in the East Cliff Road on the Cliff which is in a most unsatisfactory condition and ought to be relaid without further delay. This sewer has frequently been the cause of trouble in the past and will be so in the future unless taken up and relaid.

The house drainage is also good and is steadily improving it is now very rare indeed to find any of the grosser kinds of defects which were very familiar to me a few years ago in my house to house inspection. One of the results of this is that Typhoid fever has practically ceased to exist.

I am glad to find that you have had drawn up and printed a form in which is clearly set forth the necessary requirements for the obtaining by householders of a "Sanitary Certificate" granted by the District Council.

Water Supply: -

This is the most important question affecting the public health and welfare of your district and one which demands your earnest and immediate attention. I am well aware that you have given it your careful consideration and that you have spent much time in debate over it and I trust that practical steps will be taken forthwith. I cannot too strongly urge you to prosecute this question until it is brought to a successful

conclusion by the obtaining of an adequate supply of water for your district. The quality of your water supply is well known to be of the purest, but the quantity is equally well known to be inadequate and may at any time lead you into serious embarrassment. That you will have to spend a considerable sum of money is certain and inevitable, but the longer you put it off the larger that sum will become for the obtaining of a water supply is gradually becoming a more and more expensive affair as the population increases and there are more demands upon available sources.

I do not know whether you have considered the question of undertaking boring operations on your ground at Wroxall, unless there are legal objections to this it appears to me to be a scheme worthy of your consideration, if you have not any other practicable scheme before you.

Scavenging: -

Under this heading I am sorry to say that I have to speak of a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, for complaints have been constantly reaching me of the negligence existing in this very important sanitary matter. These complaints I have found upon examination to be well founded. Ash pits are left for weeks together, without being cleaned out, and this after repeated complaints to the scavenger. I need hardly point out to you that apart altogether from the inconvenience and annoyance that householders feel, there is a grave danger in this to the public health of a place and that especially to children for when these fermenting masses of garbage and ashes have to be removed the result is highly deleterious to all those in the

vicinity. In a district in which cases of Diphtheria have been occurring this danger ought not to be permitted.

Milkshops, Cowsheds, & Bakehouses: -

Inspections of these premises within the district have shewn that they are kept in a clean and sanitary condition.

Meteorology: -

It has been frequently advanced that we have been feeling the effects of a series of dry years in the shortage of water, but this is not the case, the year 1898 was a dry year but with that exception we have had no series of dry years though we have had previous to 1892 some dry summers. The year 1894 had a rainfall 10½in above the average. 1895.2in above the average. 1896 was an average year and so was 1897. 1898 was 5in below it. 1899 was again average, but 1900 was 5in over it, 1901 had an average rainfall while 1902 was 6in over the average. August, October and November, being exceedingly wet months.

While on this subject I think I may say that it behoves you to do something to correct the erroneous reports on thermometric readings supposed to be taken at Shanklin and published in the London daily papers. Can nothing be done to prevent this? One day last summer we were reported as having the highest reading in England which was 12° or 14° in excess of the truth, no such reading as that published was ever reached in Shanklin last summer or indeed anything approaching it. I had my own readings checked by two very careful observers and was within $\frac{1}{40}$ th of a deg. of both of them.

The same absurd errors were perpetuated in the winter months in the minimum readings.

I am not advocating any puffing of your town as a health resort but at least the truth might be adhered to, when it is a matter in which the truth is easy to obtain.

I am Gentlemen

Your obedient servant

John Cowper R. O.H.

Feb: 1903

(1)

The same amount of work was performed in the winter

months in the winter months.

I am not acquainted with the results of your work in the winter

months and cannot say whether it is better or worse than it is

in the summer months. It is not in doubt.

I am, Sir,

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,

Wm. A. ~~Gray~~ *Gray*

1891-1892